

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute the following claims for the same-numbered claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for revising a software application used by a plurality of nodes in a computer network, wherein said software application utilizes persistent data, said method comprising:

applying an upgrade to a first next level of software that understands both old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format;

applying an upgrade to a second next level of software that understands said old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the new persistent data structure format

applying a downgrade to a first previous level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format; and

applying a downgrade to a second previous level of software that understands said old persistent data structure formats,

wherein the nodes are adapted to communicate with one another at a time when said nodes are operating at different software levels with respect to one another within said computer network[.], and

wherein both upgrade processes and both downgrade processes occur without disruption

of communication between said nodes.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said persistent data structures comprise communication packet structures.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein said software application comprises a distributed system software application, and wherein said plurality of nodes hold non-volatile memory data structures.
4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein said nodes communicate with one another.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the communication between said nodes occurs using said communication packet structures.
6. (Cancelled).
7. (Currently Amended) A system for providing updates to a software application used by a plurality of nodes in a computer network, wherein said software application utilizes persistent data, said system comprising:
 - a first module operable for applying an upgrade to a first next level of software that understands both old and new persistent data structure formats;
 - a first converter in said first module operable for converting all persistent data structures

into the old persistent data structure format;

a second module operable for applying an upgrade to a second next level of software that understands said old and new persistent data structure formats;

a second converter in said second module operable for converting all persistent data structures into the new persistent data structure format

a third module operable for applying a downgrade to a first previous level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

a third converter in said third module operable for converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format; and

a fourth module operable for applying a downgrade to a second previous level of software that understands said old persistent data structure formats,

wherein the nodes are adapted to communicate with one another at a time when said nodes are operating at different software levels with respect to one another within said computer network[[]], and

wherein both upgrade processes and both downgrade processes occur without disruption of communication between said nodes.

8. (Original) The system of claim 7, wherein said persistent data structures comprise communication packet structures.

9. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 8, wherein said software application comprises a distributed system software application, and wherein said plurality of nodes hold

non-volatile memory data structures.

10. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein said nodes communicate with one another.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the communication between said nodes occurs using said communication packet structures.

12. (Cancelled).

13. (Currently Amended) A system for providing updates to a software application used by a plurality of nodes in a computer network, wherein said software application utilizes persistent data, said system comprising:

means for applying an upgrade to a first next level of software that understands both old and new persistent data structure formats;

means for converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format;

means for applying an upgrade to a second next level of software that understands said old and new persistent data structure formats;

means for converting all persistent data structures into the new persistent data structure format

means for applying a downgrade to a first previous level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

means for converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format; and

means for applying a downgrade to a second previous level of software that understands said old persistent data structure formats,

wherein the nodes are adapted to communicate with one another at a time when said nodes are operating at different software levels with respect to one another within said computer network[[]], and

wherein both upgrade processes and both downgrade processes occur without disruption of communication between said nodes.

14. (Cancelled).

15. (Currently Amended) A program storage device readable by computer, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by said computer to perform a method for revising a software application used by a plurality of nodes in a computer network, wherein said software application utilizes persistent data, said method comprising:

applying an upgrade to a first next level of software that understands both old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format;

applying an upgrade to a second next level of software that understands said old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the new persistent data structure format

applying a downgrade to a first previous level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format; and

applying a downgrade to a second previous level of software that understands said old persistent data structure formats,

wherein the nodes are adapted to communicate with one another at a time when said nodes are operating at different software levels with respect to one another within said computer network[[]], and

wherein both upgrade processes and both downgrade processes occur without disruption of communication between said nodes.

16. (Original) The program storage device of claim 15, wherein said persistent data structures comprise communication packet structures.

17. (Previously Presented) The program storage device of claim 16, wherein said software application comprises a distributed system software application, and wherein said plurality of nodes hold non-volatile memory data structures.

18. (Original) The program storage device of claim 17, wherein said nodes communicate with one another.

19. (Original) The program storage device of claim 18, wherein the communication between

said nodes occurs using said communication packet structures.

20. (Cancelled).